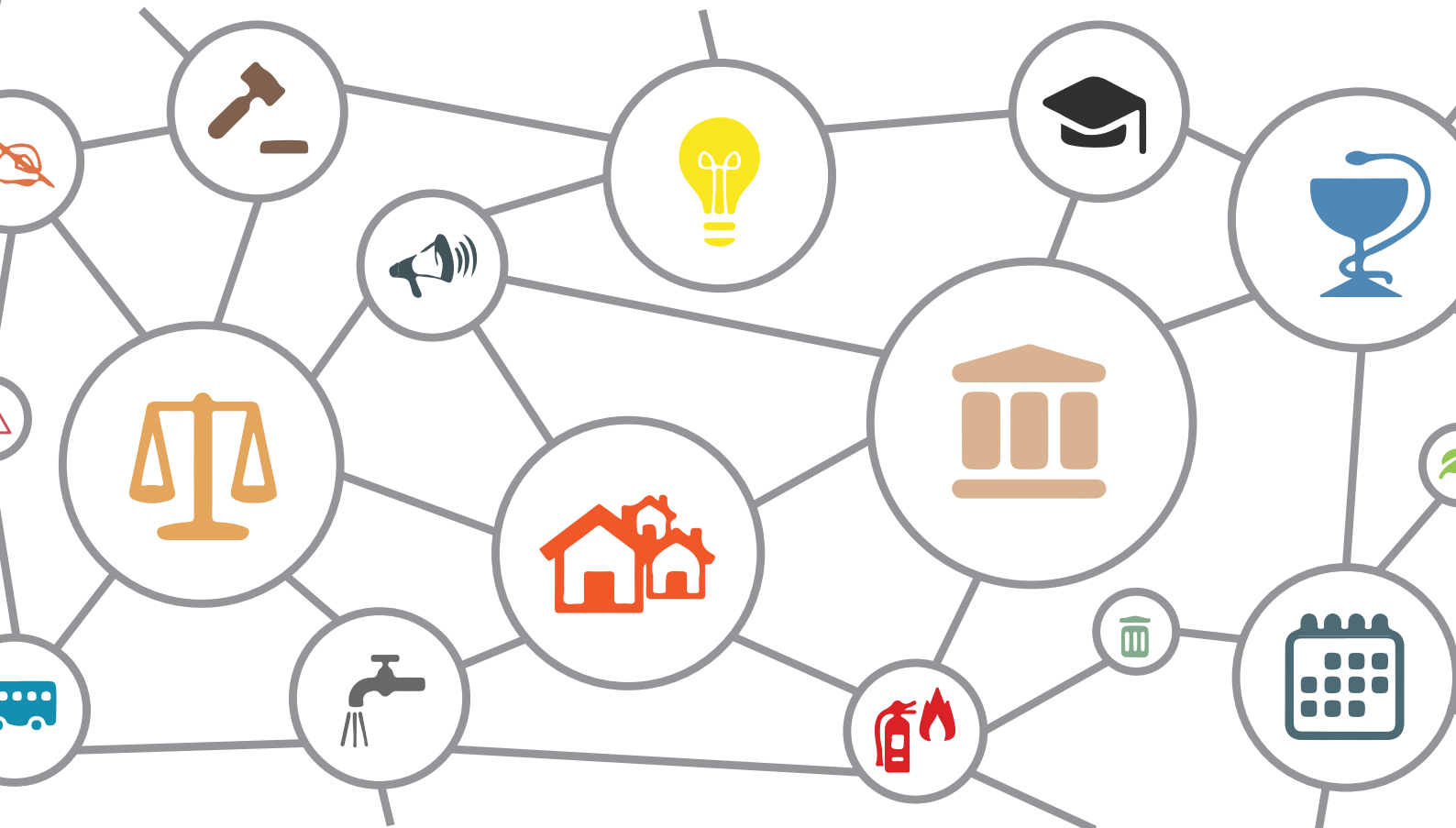




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FIVE KEY ATTRIBUTES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE



WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNANCE?

All the available definitions of good governance gravitate around the importance of a capable state operating under the rule of law. As such, a widely accepted interpretation is that good governance refers to *a government system which produces results that meet the needs of the society by making the best use of the available resources*.

- **The quality of governance can be observed at different layers of decision-making, be it within public governance or out of it – e.g. at the local level, central (executive and legislative), the judiciary, comparatively between countries or at the corporate level.**
- **When observing good governance, it is also important to take in consideration the role of other actors engaging and governance as are for example the business sector, media, civil society organizations and political parties.**
- **The assessment of the level of governance focuses on two main aspects: (a) the legal and policy framework that define the scope of competencies and accountability of the institutions; as well as the (b) the practices in place and how the legal framework is observed.**

This document summarizes the principles of good governance in five broad points, referring to multiple resources.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- **Good governance is essential to rule of law.** By committing to transparent, accountable and participatory governance, governments ensure that all processes and mechanisms necessary for effective policies and efficient use of the budget are in place. Hence, it allows for the effectuation of legal and policy frameworks that ultimately enable consistent improvement of public services.
- **Good governance ensures sustainable development across the social, economic and environment pillars** (of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030) by planning policies according to a long-term vision of society, aiming to lessen the imbalances in the 'society-nature relationship' that adversely affect the economy.
- **Good governance is directly correlated with higher public trust in the institutions by ensuring integrity, impartiality of its work as well as competent public servants.** Public trust establishes an institutions' legitimacy, while a strong legitimacy is a precondition for governments to be able to undertake structural and transformational reforms.



FIVE KEY ATTRIBUTES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

1 OPEN AND TRANSPARENT: Institutions committed to openness and transparency **proactively** provide free access to **information and processes** within their scope of work. For this purpose, **websites** are used as the main tool for making information and processes transparent to the public and it is of utmost importance that they (a) are **updated timely** and that (b) information are provided both, in a **raw** as well as in an **understandable** manner. Under this principle, institutions are encouraged to publish government data in **machine readable** format when possible or in alternative open versions. Transparent and open institutions make it possible for people to **follow the processes of decision-making** by gaining access to all versions of draft policies (or documents reviewed in government meetings), reports on the decision-making and consultation process that lead to the adopted policy. Additionally, these institutions provide frequent, timely, well-structured and indicator-based **reports on the implementation and enforcement of policies**. The availability of information on how citizens can access certain services as well as how to provide feedback or submit complaints about processes and services is also of high significance toward transparency. On the other hand, transparency cannot be achieved in a one-size-fits-all approach. Information and processes need to be **adapted to the format applicable** to different audiences – translated in multiple languages spoken in the country and adapted for access for people with different disabilities as well as **updated regularly** in each of the versions.



2 ENGAGING AND INTERACTIVE: Under this principle, institutions introduce mechanisms **that facilitate interaction** and **service provision** to citizens. **Public consultations** are conducted **online** as well as **offline**. The consultation approach as well as the dissemination of the information are **tailored in accordance to the target group**. It is very important that **sufficient time** is planned to disseminate the call for participation in public consultation as well as for interested parties to submit their feedback. Then, institutions need to regularly update the public on how the policy-making process is advancing, as described under the *1: principle of Openness and Transparency*. Additionally, within this principles, institutions utilize different tools to interact with citizens, via **social media** as well as by introducing **interactive communication tools** on their websites. In this way institutions disseminate information in a **digested form** and **encourage** citizens to engage more frequently with institutions. Like electronic communication, the provision of electronic services also falls under the principle of interaction as it expedites delivery in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Given that e-governance has shown to improve **citizen participation** and **reduce the cost** (time-wise as well as materially), governments work intensively to improve their electronic presence and interaction with the public. Engagement and interaction with the public enables **responsive decision-making** based on the feedback gathered from the citizens as final beneficiaries.



3 INTEGRITY AND CONTROL OF CORRUPTION: Institutions observing the principles of good governance have enacted strong mechanisms of accountability throughout their structure; and promote a culture of integrity to prevent conflict of interest and corruption. Such institutions recruit highly-competent civil servants through merit-based and competitive systems to ensure **professionalism and ethical behavior**. Ethical behavior and the integrity of the public servants is defined with institutional policies as **integrity plans and codes of conduct**, while at the same time the legal framework is also carefully observed. In implementing the legal provisions, these institutions provide **whistleblower protection** for anyone exposing unethical behavior and abuse of power; **register and control lobbying activities, conflict of interests, use of state property and gifts** of all elected and appointed officials as well as civil servants. One of the mechanisms for oversight and control of corruption is the **publication of asset declarations on machine readable format**.



4 INCLUSIVE AND CONSENSUS ORIENTED: Institutions that observe the principles of good governance pay significant attention to mediating the interests of all the communities and aim to reach **broad consensus** in the process of decision making. This principle requires policies to reflect deep understanding of the social context and **consideration for marginalized groups and minorities** in the society. This is achieved through inclusive and participatory mechanisms that engage citizens in decision-making processes with an adapted approach for the different groups/communities, as described under *section 2: Engaging and Interactive*; hand in hand with cross-sectorial evidence collected from the implementation of various policies and processes, which are sensitive to the marginalized groups and minorities and **collect data** on how they are affected. Inclusive governance also implies an **equitable distribution of wealth and prosperity** across the population which is ensured through the adoption of responsive policies and measures.



5 DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING: is the backbone of good governance. It prescribes the collection of data for all ongoing processes in the scope of work of an institution, which in turn requires **adequate planning of indicators** that will be reported on. The commitment to base decision making on effective **monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)** frameworks yields data on the effectiveness of policies, their degree of enforcement, their impact as well as gaps. In turn, it enables institutions to generate **enlightening reports** about the progress of given processes and as such inform their work about upcoming steps more realistically. By enabling institutions to shape effective policies, data-based decision-making **reduces the need of amending laws** too frequently and, as such, prevents the decreasing of public trust in the capacities of the system to find adequate solutions. Additionally, working with data enables institutions to **match and compare information** from their different scopes of work and significantly improve the outcome of decision-making. It also enables institutions to conduct quality **regulatory and budgetary impact assessment** prior to proposing bills. The effective application of MEL frameworks in governance indicates that good governance is an ingrained principle of management in the given institution and ensures its **sustainability** in the long run.

